

A K

BC-EVANS VAK-2TAKES 8-18

††BC-EVANSNOVAK-2TAKES 8-18 THE FOLLOWING EVANS-NOVAK COLUMN
IS COPYRIGHTED AND FOR USE ONLY BY NEWSPAPERS THAT HAVE
ARRANGED FOR ITS PUBLICATION WITH FIELD NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE.
ANY OTHER USE IS PROHIBITED.†

††RELEASE THURSDAY, AUGUST 18†

††(TRANSMITTED 8-17)†

††INSIDE REPORT: CARTER'S AGONIZING CHOICE†

†BY ROWLAND EVANS AND ROBERT NOVAK†

WASHINGTON - PRESIDENT CARTER MUST DECIDE SOON
BETWEEN PERMITTING OR BLOCKING CRIMINAL PROSECUTION OF
FORMER CIA DIRECTOR RICHARD HELMS; AN AGONIZING CHOICE
OF WHETHER TO FULFILL HIS CAMPAIGN PLEDGES FOR "OPEN"
GOVERNMENT AT THE COST OF THE NATION'S HIGHER INTERESTS.

SO DANGEROUS TO THIS COUNTRY ARE THE IMPLICATIONS
OF THE UNPRECEDENTED GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION OF HELMS
ON SUSPICION OF PERJURY THAT MR. CARTER HAS BEEN SECRETLY
WARNED BY INFORMAL ADVISERS HE MUST NEVER LET THE CASE
GO TO TRIAL. ONE EMINENT DEMOCRAT, DEEPLY INVOLVED IN
HIGH INTELLIGENCE MATTERS FOR MANY YEARS, HAS SAID PRIVATELY
THAT HELMS'S INDICTMENT AND TRIAL "WOULD BE THE SINGLE
MOST DAMAGING THING THAT COULD BE DONE TO THIS COUNTRY."

THESE "DAMAGING" CONSEQUENCES WOULD INCLUDE FURTHER
DETERIORATION OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE; AN END OF ANY FURTHER
INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. BY ALLIED NATIONS
AND EXPOSING THE NATION AND ITS RECENT PRESIDENTS TO
OBLOQUY. IN SHORT, SELF-FLAGELLATION OF THE NATION WOULD
REACH A MADONCHISTIC PEAK.

TO PREVENT THIS, THE PRESIDENT MUST BLOCK THE GRAND
JURY, NOW WELL INTO ITS SECOND YEAR OF PROBING THE TRUTH
OF HELMS'S 1973 SENATE TESTIMONY ON CHILE. MR. CARTER
ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE TO INSTRUCT ATTY. GEN.
GRIFFIN BELL TO VETO AN INDICTMENT AND THEREBY PREVENT
A TRIAL.

SUCH A MOVE WOULD INFURIATE THE LIBERAL COMMUNITY;
INCLUDING LARGE SEGMENTS OF CONGRESS AND THE PRESS.
MOREOVER, MR. CARTER'S CAMPAIGN TRAIL WAS STREWN WITH
PLEDGES, CALCULATED TO MAKE HIM APPEAR DIFFERENT FROM
PRESIDENT FORD, FOR GOVERNMENT OPERATING "IN THE OPEN,"
AS HE DECLARED IN THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE.

THAT THE GRAND JURY IS MOVING TOWARD INDICTING HELMS
BY NO MEANS SUGGESTS GUILT. IN FACT, EXPERIENCED
LAWYERS AND POLITICIANS HERE BELIEVE THE CHANCE OF FINDING
THE FORMER CHIEF SPY GUILTY OF PERJURY IS, IN THE WORDS
OF ONE LAWYER, "EXACTLY ZERO."

NEVERTHELESS, IN HIS DEFENSE, HELMS WOULD BE
COMPELLED TO REVEAL THE MOST SECRET OVAL OFFICE AND
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS. THIS UNQUESTIONABLY
WOULD INVOLVE FORMER PRESIDENTS IN WHAT THE CIA'S CRITICS
CALL THE BEASTLY, SQUALID SIDE OF THE INTELLIGENCE GAME.
HELMS WOULD BE RELIEVED FROM PROTECTING SOURCES AND
DIRECTIONS GIVEN TO HIM, EVEN BY A PRESIDENT, IF FORCED TO
DEFEND HIMSELF IN A PUBLIC TRIAL.

THE PRESIDENT COULD BE TAKEN OFF THE HOOK BY
GEORGE A. CARVER AND ROBERT G. ANDARY, JUSTICE DEPARTMENT
CRIMINAL DIVISION LAWYERS IN CHARGE OF THE HELMS
INVESTIGATION. THEY COULD SIMPLY RULE THE GRAND JURY HAD
"NO CASE."

THE PRESIDENT IS NOT GOING TO BE SO LUCKY; WELL-INFORMED SOURCES HAVE TOLD US. E YOUTHFUL INVESTIGATORS O HAVE SPENT SO MANY MONTHS HUNTING HELMS DOWN WANT TO CONFRONT HIM IN OPEN COURT AS PROSECUTORS.

THE GRAND JURY PROBE HAS SUBPOENED EVERY SCRAP OF PAPER IN THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY BEARING ON CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE LATE MARXIST PRESIDENT OF CHILE, SALVADOR ALLENDE. IT HAS QUESTIONED FOR LONG HOURS SCORES OF TOP CIA OFFICIALS AND FORMER OFFICIALS. INCLUDED ARE THOMAS KARAMEISSINES, WHO FOR MANY YEARS RAN CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS; AND ELIZABETH DUNLEVY, HELM'S LONGTIME CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY.

FNS (MORE) B-17

7771

1117817TAA Z

A K

BC-EVANSNOVAK-1STADD B-18

1117817TAA Z (WASHINGTON) EVANS-NOVAK (B-17) X X X SECRETARY.

INTEROFFICE MEMOS, PERSONAL LOGS, CALENDARS AND RECORDS OF EVERY TRACEABLE TELEPHONE CALL MADE OUT OF HELMS'S OFFICE DURING HIS SEVEN YEARS AS CIA DIRECTOR - AS WELL AS THOUSANDS OF CALLS FROM CIA'S LATIN-AMERICAN SECTION - ARE UNDER GRAND JURY SCRUTINY.

ACCORDINGLY, PROSECUTORS CARVER AND ANDARY WOULD NO MORE WELCOME A PRESIDENTIAL ORDER BARRING INDICTMENT AND TRIAL THAN WOULD LIBERALS IN CONGRESS; THE MEDIA AND ELSEWHERE WHO HAVE EXPENDED SO MUCH RIGHTEDUS ENERGY AGAINST THE ONCE SUPER-SECRET CIA.

THAT RIGHTEDUS ENERGY AND HELMS'S PREDICAMENT BOTH STEM PARTLY FROM BAD DECISIONS MADE IN THE FORD WHITE HOUSE AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DURING THE POST-NIXON DEMAND FOR PURGING WATERGATE WICKEDNESS. THE GRAND JURY PROBE OF HELMS WAS STARTED BY FORD'S ATTORNEY GENERAL, EDWARD LEVI, AN ACTION VIEWED BY ONE SEASONED LAWYER HERE WITH LIBERAL CONNECTIONS AS "AN OUTRAGE."

BUT LEVI HAD PLENTY OF COMPANY. HELMS, WHO GAVE 32 YEARS OF HONORABLE SERVICE TO HIS COUNTRY, WAS SUMMONED TO THE WHITE HOUSE FROM HIS POST AS AMBASSADOR TO IRAN IN JANUARY 1975 TO BE WARNED BY PRESIDENTIAL COUNSEL PHILIP BUCHEN. HELMS WAS INFORMED THAT ANYTHING HE TOLD THE PRESIDENT (IDENTIFIED BY BUCHEN AS "THE NATION'S CHIEF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER") COULD BE USED AGAINST HIM IN THE INVESTIGATION LEVI WAS THEN CONTEMPLATING.

WITH POST-WATERGATE MORALITY REINFORCED BY JIMMY CARTER'S PROMISES NEVER TO RUN OTHER THAN AN "OPEN" GOVERNMENT, A PRESIDENTIAL DECISION TO BLOCK INDICTMENT OF HELMS WOULD NOT BE EASY. BUT THE ALTERNATIVE, EXPOSING THE NATION'S INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM AND PAST OCCUPANTS OF THE OVAL OFFICE TO FURTHER ABUSE, MIGHT WELL BE PONDERED CAREFULLY BY THE PRESIDENT.

FNS (ENDIT EVANS-NOVAK) B-17